

Tooba Gondal Was “Living the Life” In ISIS, Now Demands to Be Readmitted to the UK

by Hugh Fitzgerald



This “British” Muslim’s unedifying tale, full of self-pity, mendacity, and unbelievable gall, is [here](#), as reported last week:

A jihadi ‘matchmaker’ who allegedly recruited Shamima Begum into Islamic State has issued an apology and begged to return to Britain to face justice.

Tooba Gondal, 25, has spent a year detained in a camp in northern Syria where hundreds of ‘Isis brides’ and their children have been rounded up. She pleaded for the government to let her return with her ‘innocent’ children, who she says are frequently ill, but conceded she must be ‘held to account’ for leaving Britain to join the caliphate.

In an open letter to the British public, the former student

from Walthamstow, London, said: 'It is not just for my government to keep us here for nearly a year now.

'I want to face justice in a British court. I wish to redeem myself. I would like Britain to accept my apology and give me another chance.'

In [an earlier story](#) on her plight, we read this:

A British woman who joined Isis in Syria and recruited teenage girls has pleaded to return to the UK for a "normal life."

She considers herself to be "British" but as we discover, having lived in Great Britain for 19 years, she never became a British citizen; she had "British residency," but a French passport. Why didn't she want to become a British citizen? Citizenship doesn't matter to her; it's only her Muslim identity that matters.

Tooba Gondal's appeal was a stark contrast to a previous Twitter post where she attacked "lies that muhajireen regret hijrah [joining Isis] and desperately want to return" to the west.

Until the very last moment, when ISIS was finally crushed, Gondal was still singing the praises of her life in the Islamic State, still trying to entice female recruits to join others in the Islamic State. It was only when ISIS collapsed around her that she suddenly remembered she was "British" (or at least, had a British residency permit), and decided she wanted to return to the security of an Infidel land. Now it was she who wanted the very thing she had previously mocked; that is, she "desperately wanted to return" to Great Britain.

She had used social media to urge "sisters" to join her in the terrorist group's strongholds, while celebrating terror

attacks and condemning the “kuffar” [disbelievers].

Tooba Gondal was not at all offended by any of ISIS’s atrocities, but rather, tremendously excited at her own participation in ISIS. She acted as a recruiter of other girls and women, persuading them to leave Europe and join the fight against the “kuffar” in the Islamic State, where they would be useful companions to the male jihadis, establishing a semblance of normal family life for these fanatical killers.

Tweeting under the name Umm Muthanna al-Britannia, she shared a photo of herself brandishing an AK-47 with the caption “living the life.”

A 2015 tweet claimed she had obtained a suicide vest and continued: “I came here to die. I will not leave till I get what I came here for: shahadah [martyrdom].”

Tooba Gondal was acting out her dreams of Jihadist glory. Once in Syria, she had taken a new Arabic name – all very exciting – Umm Muthanna al-Britannia. She shared a photo of herself brandishing an AK-47, with the caption underneath reading “living the life.” What fun! She boasted in a tweet about having a suicide vest. She wanted everyone to believe it was true. For four years, she was an unswerving enthusiast for mass murder. She lamented having missed seeing the killing of the French kuffar in Paris in November 2015.

Now that ISIS has finally been crushed in Syria, Gondal wants to be admitted back into the U.K., with assorted stories about how miserable life has become – lots of violence (shootings, explosions, but this time she was among those being threatened), and food shortages in what was once the Islamic State. We need to remind ourselves of how eagerly she recruited women for ISIS. Nor should we forget that AK-47 she brandished so proudly, that suicide vest she claimed to have, that *nom de guerre* – all part of her new persona. Did she get

to kill a few Infidels herself – Yazidis, Christians, Shi'a Rafidite dogs, Sunnis deemed insufficiently fanatical in their faith? Probably not, because if she had, she would certainly have boasted of it. She was proud of her association with the mass murderers of ISIS.

She even tweeted a message from Syria a few hours after the November 2015 killings in Paris, in which 130 were killed by ISIS operatives. She took to Twitter to announce: "Wish I could have seen the hostages being slaughtered last night with my own eyes. Would have been just beautiful." And added: "LOL, HOW SCARED ARE THESE KUFFAR."

Tooba Gondal knew exactly what she was getting into when she went to Syria to join ISIS. The decapitations of the journalist James Foley and the aid worker Alan Henning had taken place, and been put online, before she joined ISIS; that group's murderous brutality was well known to her before she set off to join the Islamic State. Her recruitment videos showed her asking her "sisters" to join the fight; she continually denounced the kuffar, and took evident pleasure when they were murdered.

"Everyone around me is getting shahadah," she later wrote. "When will it be my turn?"

But Gondal has claimed she is "not a threat" since being caught by Kurdish-led forces as she tried to flee ISIS's last territory towards the Turkish border.

"Not a threat"? But Tooba Gondal has not given up her jihadi ideals, has expressed no horror or sorrow over what ISIS did. That surely suggests she would remain a threat to the well-being of Unbelievers should she ever be readmitted to the U.K.. Gondal has merely said she wants to avoid the insecurity and food shortages she endured during the last weeks of ISIS before being taken prisoner by the Kurds. She claims, quite outrageously, that she has an unassailable right to be

admitted to Great Britain.

Now 25, she is being held in Ayn Issa camp with her children. She has said she feared for their health, following the death of several children including Shamima Begum's baby.

In an interview with the Rojava Information Centre, she claimed it was a "relief" to leave ISIS territory, where there had been food shortages and "constant bombing, sniping and bullets."

"The women and the children became the victims," Gondal said. "It was a complete mess and even trying to leave was almost ... it was a mission to try to find any way to escape or any reliable smugglers who could help you."

The women who joined ISIS did not become victims; nor were they ever victims of anything other than their savage ideology. They were eager to join the Islamic State, with its tens of thousands of Islam-prompted murderers who delighted in killing their victims – Christians, Yazidis, Shii'a, insufficiently fanatical Sunni Muslims. Those murders were widely publicized. The young women who went off to join ISIS knew perfectly well what they were getting into, though some now claim disingenuously that they had no idea. Tooba Gondal claims that her reason for wishing to leave the Ayn Issa camp where former ISIS members are being held in Syria, and to return to Britain, is not because of any horror she feels about ISIS, but because of the "complete mess" in the last territory given up by ISIS, where there were "food shortages" and "constant bombing, sniping, and bullets." Had there been enough food, had ISIS not been under siege but still fully in control of its territory, had she not been imprisoned by the Kurds, there is every reason to think that Tooba Gondal would have been quite content to remain.

The former Goldsmiths University student said she was born in France and is of Pakistani heritage, but grew up in London

from the age of three.

Gondal said she has “permanent British residency” but a French passport, which she concealed by sewing it into her children’s nappies.

“I feel British, but Britain refuses to take us,” she added.

How does she “feel British”? Does her heart swell with pride when she sees the Royal Family waving from Buckingham Palace? Is she entranced by the Changing of the Guard, or Trooping the Colour? Does she like to see the Union Jack fluttering? Watch the Swan Upping? Or perhaps what most impresses her is how the Mother of Parliament works. What exactly is it that makes her “feel British”? We’d like to know.

Gondal said she had heard news that the Home Office had revoked fellow Isis bride Shamima Begum’s British citizenship.

She does not say that she “is British” but only that she “feels British.” In fact, though she lived in Great Britain for 19 years, she never bothered to obtain British citizenship, but made do with “permanent British residency” and a French passport. That bespeaks not loyalty to Britain, but an indifference to what Western country she is a citizen of, as long as she can enjoy security and, no doubt, the generous welfare benefits of all kinds that all Western European countries now provide.

“I know the British public, they are scared, they don’t want to deal with us, but they must deal with us,” she added.

She seems to be both taunting “the British” and defying them. The British public are not “scared,” but are sensibly apprehensive about the Muslims in their midst; these are different things. Here is a girl who has betrayed the country

that gave her family refuge, who goes off to join the Islamic State, which is at war with all the Infidels, including those in Great Britain; once in ISIS, she enthusiastically agreed to serve as a valued recruiter of other Muslim girls. She put online a photograph of herself proudly brandishing an AK-47 ("living the life"), boasted in a tweet of owning a suicide vest, and in November 2015 tweeted how much she wished she could have seen the French Unbelievers being slaughtered by jihadis. And yet she has the gall to claim that the British "don't want to deal with us, but they must deal with us."

"We can't stay in this camp for the rest of our lives, they must deal with us. We are not [sic] threat to their society, we just want a normal life again. If I did not [sic] harm to anyone, if I committed no harm in Syria for four years, what kind of threat can I be to Britain?"

Tooba Gondal claims three times that the "British must deal with us." She's quite wrong. The British are under no obligation to "deal with," that is, "take back," either Tooba Gondal or anyone else who left the U.K. to knowingly join the Islamic State. Ms. Gondal was not a child, but 22 years old, when she arrived in the Islamic State. She chose to join fanatical Muslims, the mortal enemies of the people and government of Great Britain. Her example can be likened to that of William Joyce, known as Lord Haw Haw, who during World War II made broadcasts for Nazi Germany, just as Tooba Gondal made YouTube appeals to recruit young women for ISIS. Joyce was hanged. No one proposes to hang Gondal for treason, but nor do they think she has a right to be taken back by Great Britain, a country, and that country's people, whom she betrayed when she went to work for ISIS.

Nikita Malik, director of the Centre on Radicalisation and Terrorism at the Henry Jackson Society, said Gondal and other female ISIS recruiters were "vital" to Isis's state-building project.

“They were essential in reaching out to women and also in propaganda – that was the way that Isis was able to recruit women,” she told The Independent. “We had women in communication with other women about the importance of the sisterhood and the need to join Isis state-building operations. They were also able to provide answers to questions about life in the ‘caliphate’ and help with logistics.”

“The Islamic State and the Kufr [disbeliever] State. Which state are you on?” she asked her followers.

“After reaching Syria, Gondal shared photos of herself holding an AK-47, owning a car, eating and socialising with other women.

“Sisters come to the land of freedom! We have everything here for you,” she urged, saying girls could privately message her for advice on how to evade western security services to reach Syria.

“An undercover newspaper investigation caught her grooming a British teenage girl to join Isis on social media, with a detailed plan to travel to Isis via Switzerland and Istanbul.

[...]

“The Home Office said it could not comment on individual cases, but has vowed to investigate anyone returning from Iraq or Syria and prosecute them where possible.

“A spokesperson said: “The UK has advised against all travel to Syria and parts of Iraq for many years. We have powers to prevent individuals from returning to the UK. Anyone that does return should expect to be investigated to determine if they have committed crimes or pose a threat to our national security.”

“The government has stripped more than 150 people of their

British citizenship “for the public good” in recent years and made no move to help others leave camps in Syria.

Let's sum up the case of Tooba Gondal. Knowing full well what the Islamic State was all about, she left Great Britain in 2015 for ISIS, and became a recruiter of girls and women for the group. She uploaded pictures of herself with an AK-47, over a caption of “Living the life,” boasted of having a suicide vest, took an Arabic name, reported on how much she would have enjoyed seeing the Kuffar in Paris being killed, told those she was recruiting what a wonderful time she was having in the Islamic State...Now ISIS is in ruins, and Gondal suddenly realizes that she wants desperately to come back to Great Britain after all. The last days of ISIS were unpleasant – not enough food, too much violence (!). And now she's being held in a camp by the Kurds. Britain simply must deal with her, she keeps repeating. But why? Why does Great Britain owe her anything? Because “she feels British.” They owe it to her. Besides she just “wants a normal life again.” A “normal life,” just like what she had for four years in the Islamic State when it was still going, or the “normal life” she was forced to endure when living among kuffar in Great Britain?

Let's take one last look at the topsy-turvy moral universe of Tooba Gondal:

“I know the British public, they are scared, they don't want to deal with us, but they must deal with us,” she added.

“We can't stay in this camp for the rest of our lives, they must deal with us. We are not threat to their society, we just want a normal life again. If I did no harm to anyone, if I committed no harm in Syria for four years, what kind of threat can I be to Britain?”

She doesn't understand: the British public are not scared, and right now they are dealing with her, just not in the way she

wishes. They are pressuring their own government not to let her back in. That's how the British public intends to deal with her. The British have already stripped citizenship from 150 people who joined the Islamic State. Gondal isn't even a British citizen, merely a British "resident," making it even easier to keep her out. Eventually the Kurds will let her out of the camp. She will then either be stuck in Syria, where Assad's men will likely treat very harshly an ex-recruiter for ISIS, or more likely, she will be sent to Pakistan, her parents' original country of origin, where she can live among others like herself, who share her hatred for the kuffar. If she continues to insist to British authorities that "I did no harm to anyone," they can set her straight; she was a recruiter for a group of fanatical murderers; that causes harm aplenty.

Tooba Gondal has never expressed regret about joining ISIS. She now wishes to go back to Great Britain because of her discomfort, not because she feels any moral dismay. She has not yet uttered a syllable against the Islamic State. There is no reason to think that if she were allowed back, and either given a prison sentence or allowed to stay out of prison on parole, so as to be able to take care of her children, that she would give up her ISIS sympathies. She would likely continue to spread her views, whether in or out of prison. For Tooba Gondal, only one place is suitable. Pakistan beckons. Let it.

First published in